



Welcome to a web page devoted to helping environmental stakeholders participate in the siting of renewable energy transmission lines in California and neighboring states. We write as the environmental representatives to the Renewable Energy Transmission Initiative (RETI) process. We are participating in it to ensure that renewable energy resources are brought on line as quickly as possible to address the crisis of global warming with the least possible damage to the environment. New transmission lines must and will be built in California and other western states. They will be built better and more sensitively if the environmental community participates in the process that decides where they should go. We have a profound responsibility to help get renewable power developed. We hope you will help us.

Global warming is the greatest environmental challenge humanity has ever faced. If we are to spare the planet's ecosystems, people and wildlife from drastic change, greatly diminished lives and mass extinction, we need to act expeditiously. To slow and eventually stop the warming of our atmosphere, we need to use energy efficiently and to transition as quickly as possible from fossil fuels like coal, oil and natural gas to renewable ones like wind, solar and geothermal energy. This will require the efforts of all of us, from individuals to the largest businesses in the world; from city councils to national governments. It will require difficult decisions but it will also provide us with great opportunities and benefits – environmental, economic and social – domestically and globally.

The good news is we have all the energy we require; it will just come from different sources than those we are using today. Here in California we are blessed with excellent wind resources, outstanding geothermal resources and some of the very best solar resources on the planet. The Mojave Desert is perhaps the world's best site for solar electricity because it not only has excellent weather and solar conditions, it also is closer to the load centers – concentrations of people who need the power – than any other similar site in the world. And we have the technologies at our disposal to utilize these resources.

California is already the world leader in making needed changes. The state has made dramatic improvements in energy efficiency, as the result of which we have held per capita electricity use essentially constant, while the rest of the nation's per capita use increased by nearly 50%. And we continue to aggressively pursue the remaining opportunities to become more efficient. We have also adopted laws and policies that promote and accelerate the development of renewable energy resources and that reduce global warming pollution. California's Renewable Portfolio Standard requires the state's utilities to provide 20% of their power from renewable resources by 2010, and the governor has set a goal of reaching 33% by 2020. Numerous other states, the nation and other countries often follow our lead. We are both technological and public policy innovators.

Because of our leadership we are being closely watched by others. Will we successfully meet the ambitious goals we have set for ourselves? If we do, others will follow our course. But if we fail, others may retreat on their commitments – with disastrous results for all that we have fought so hard for: clean air and water, protected areas and national parks, and a diverse and rich natural world. To succeed, we must develop and use our renewable energy resources responsibly in place of dirty fossil fuels.

The key to unlocking our vast supplies of renewable energy resources is building properly located transmission lines to the places with the most potential and the fewest environmental conflicts. There is no such thing as an impact-free energy source. No one likes transmission lines. But unless we solve this problem, we will continue using fossil fuels with far worse environmental consequences and fail to meet our obligation to future generations. Once we accept this obligation, the question becomes: how do we do this responsibly? Many of us have fought unnecessary and destructive power line proposals. This is different. The climate clock is ticking and we need to be part of the solution: we need to help figure out the best places to put new lines. Our participation will reward us with a transmission system that meets our future renewable needs while taking up the least amount of land and protecting the most important places, plants and threatened species possible.

We realize this will take many people out of their comfort zones, but we are asking for your help. We need new transmission lines. They must be built. We can help do this correctly.

The Renewable Energy Transmission Initiative (RETI) process will help ensure our voice and concerns are heard in siting decisions. It will allow us to work on an even footing with generators, utilities, and regulators at the state and national levels. It also will allow us to coordinate with colleagues in neighboring states. The process will identify the areas with the best renewable generating capacity and will identify transmission corridors that bring power to where people live and work with the fewest land and species conflicts we can manage. This is RETI's goal and all participants have so far committed to it. But we all know there will be challenges and we are all committed to working in good faith to sort them out.

We will post updates and information on the process on this site. We will also host meetings at various locations around the state and establish a listserve through which environmental stakeholders can communicate with us directly. Information on this environmental listserve will be provided as soon as available. There will be plenary sessions at RETI meetings at which people can directly communicate with the steering committee members. We will keep you posted as best we can and urge you to communicate with us with concerns, information and hopefully and most importantly suggestions about how to get this right. We intend for this to be a transparent process that is as inclusive as possible. We ask for your help. For all our sakes we hope you will provide it.

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